

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

1. (Original) A method for processing a transaction, comprising:
5 determining a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;
generating a random number; and
rounding said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on said random number.

10 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number is performed by a third party to said transaction.

15 3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number is supervised by a third party to said transaction.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number further comprises the step of obtaining a seller-generated increment value.

20 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number further comprises the step of obtaining a buyer-provided offset value.

25 6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a buyer commitment to the transaction is obtained by means of currency submitted to a vending machine.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a buyer commitment to the transaction is obtained by means of currency submitted to a trusted third party prior to the generation of said random number.

8. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is specified by the buyer in response to a query.

9. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is generated from a serial number obtained from paper currency provided by the buyer.

10. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is generated from a numeric identifier obtained from a product associated with said transaction.

11. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the seller generated random number is made without access to said buyer-provided offset value.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a transaction, comprising:
determining a purchase price, $N.C$, for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost, p , equal to $C/100$, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N ;
generating a random number; and
rounding said purchase price up to a price of $N+1$ units with a probability of p and down to a price of N units with a probability of $(1-p)$, wherein probability p equals $C/100$.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said step of generating a random number is performed in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of obtaining a buyer commitment to the transaction.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a transaction, comprising:
determining a purchase price, $N.C$, for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost, p , equal to $C/100$, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N ;

receiving an amount of X units from a buyer, where X is greater than N;
generating a random number; and
rounding said purchase price up to a price of X units with a probability of
 $((N + p) / X)$ and down to a price of zero units with a probability of $1 - ((N + p) / X)$,
5 wherein probability p equals C/100.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said step of generating a
random number is performed in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

10 17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of
obtaining a buyer commitment to the transaction.

18. (Original) A system for processing a transaction, comprising:
a memory that stores computer-readable code; and
15 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured
to implement said computer-readable code, said computer-readable code configured to:
determine a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price
including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;
generate a random number; and
20 round said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on
said random number.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said random number is
generated in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

25 20. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said processor is further
configured to obtain a buyer commitment to the transaction.

21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 18, wherein said purchase
30 price, N.C, for said transaction includes a fractional cost, ~~p~~, equal to C/100, that exceeds
a whole-unit amount, N, and said purchase price is rounded up to a price of N+1 units

with a probability of p and rounded down to a price of N units with a probability of $(1-p)$,
wherein probability p equals $C/100$.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 18, wherein said purchase
 5 price, $N.C$, for said transaction includes a fractional cost, ~~p~~ , equal to $C/100$, that exceeds
 a whole-unit amount, N and wherein an amount of X units is received from a buyer,
 where X is greater than N , and wherein said purchase price is rounded up to a price of X
 units with a probability of $((N + p) / X)$ and rounded down to a a price of zero units with
 a probability of $1 - ((N + p) / X)$, wherein probability p equals $C/100$.

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23. (Original) An article of manufacture for processing a transaction,
 comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable code means
 embodied thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:

15 a step to determine a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase
 price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;
 a step to generate a random number; and
 a step to round said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount
 based on said random number.

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